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Notes of the Month.

There is ample evidence that the subject upon which Dr. Campbell writes in another column is now engaging the earnest attention of the more prominent leaders in all the Churches. A comparatively short time ago these men had little or nothing to say publicly upon the matter; but now, urged by public opinion and by conditions of life created for us by the war, they have suddenly brought forward the question as one of supreme importance, which indeed it is. The Bishop of Birmingham, in an interview recently given to the Press, emphasises the fact that the Church is now grappling with the evil, and at the same time gives proof that he himself has got a proper understanding of the situation. He says, "You may force people into acceptance [of rules], you may dragoon, but that is not the way in which to get rid of this evil. It is not sufficient that it is the duty of the State to cleanse the streets. It is the duty of the Church to raise character."

* *

That it is the duty of the Church to raise character has been our contention from time to time, and we are convinced that, whilst every helpful agency should be employed, the most important amongst them all is the production of good, sound, moral character in the community. This work is peculiarly the work of the Church, and, in so far as the Church neglects the work, it is not doing its duty. It is not satisfactory to put the responsibility upon the State; the State, it is true, may make it difficult for a man to do wrong, but it has not therefore made him a moral man. The main responsibility rests with the Church. And now there are some indications that the Church may have to some extent missed its way, and perhaps aimed at the wrong objective. It had a choice between creed and conduct, and it emphasised creed of a sort that belongs to past ages, notwithstanding the fact that conduct has been well estimated to form three-fourths of our human life. We are in entire agreement with the Bishop, when he says, "I still feel that the religious bodies must first of all blame themselves, and say, 'We have not so influenced those to whom we have been going, that we have given them the highest, purest notions of what life may be made.'"

In connection with the Moderator's visits to the churches on behalf of the Forward Movement, a series of United Services have been arranged as follows—March 6th—Larne, combining Larne, Raloo, Cairncastle, and Glenarm; March 8th—Banbridge, combining Banbridge, Dromore, Moira, and Newry; March 14th—Comber, combining Comber, Newtownards, Moneyrea, and Killinchy; April 1st—Downpatrick, combining Downpatrick, Ballee, and Clough; April 1st (evening)—Rademon; May 6th—Templepatrick, combining Templepatrick, Antrim, Crumlin, and Ballyclare. It is hoped that there will be large and representative attendances at all these services, and that much good will accrue from them.

THE QUESTION OF THE MOMENT.

By Dr. John Campbell.

Recently, in response to a suggestion from the medical profession, the Lord Mayor of Belfast called a meeting in the City Hall to consider the best means of limiting the spread of certain diseases. The aim is to encourage people suffering from these affections to have them attended to in the early stages. In most great towns in England and Scotland a similar work is being inaugurated.

For some time past the Bishop of London has been urging the authorities to carry on an active campaign against persons who are liable to spread such diseases, and to punish severely those who are convicted.

Both schemes have the same end in view, namely, the limitation of the spread of disease. Both resemble the efforts made two generations ago in the same cause. Both deserve support, and are admirable so far as they go; but the experience of former times was that they did not go very far. Indeed it could hardly be expected that they would, as they do not go to the root of the matter. What is needed is such religious instruction as will raise up a generation with a higher moral ideal than we have now, or ever have had. This will necessitate a complete reformation in religious teaching, and in religious thought and feeling. A large proportion of the youth of the country is trained on the catechisms of the great Churches. These catechisms are not up to modern standards of religious and moral training. They are concerned chiefly with matters which have little or no bearing on the conduct of life. They deal too much with theology, and too little with the teaching of the Founder of Christianity. That their defects are dimly seen by the public is shown by the existence of the Moral Education League and kindred societies outside the Churches.

The medical profession and the law of the land have an important place in this matter, but they can only act after much harm has been done. They alone cannot strengthen the national character and produce a higher moral tone. This responsibility rests on the Churches. They cannot evade it by invoking the power of the law, or by supporting medicine in its remedial efforts. Which ecclesiastical organisation will have the courage to begin the great advance?

Y. M. C. A. HUTS.

I suppose you have heard of these huts, erected for the benefit of British soldiers, and have seen pictures of them; but you would like to know more about them—what they are like, and what they are used for.

In the first place, they are not hospitals nor hotels, neither are they churches or theatres, or picture palaces, or lecture halls, or music halls, or shops, or libraries, or buffets; yet they have been used for all these things, except the first, perhaps, and generally as substitutes for as many of them as possible in places where the things themselves are not to be met with.

The four initials stand for "The Young Men's Christian Association," but it is not alone the certified or professing Christians that are admitted to the Y.M.C.A. Huts. They are open to all soldiers of the British Army on

condition that they behave as gentlemen, and all of them show themselves capable of doing so as long as they are in the huts. The object of the Association and its workers in showing kindness to soldiers, is not so much that of a person who would give them a cup of water because they are Christ's, because in so doing he shall not lose his reward, but rather that of an admirer of the Good Samaritan's example, who naturally desires to go and do likewise. The badge of the Association, which figures conspicuously as a sign upon the exterior wall of the huts, consists of the four initials athwart a red triangle with inverted apex. The triangle is said to be symbolic of the tripartite constitution of man, and the threefold aim of the Association to do him good as touching each and all of his three component parts—body, mind, and spirit. The figure is equilateral, but if it is the base which is the most important, as representing the spiritual side of the Association's work, its position in the inverted figure is appropriately characteristic of its method, since, with the wisdom of the serpent, this primary, fundamental purpose is not made unduly prominent to the extent of being offensively obtrusive to the multitudes of military men who, whilst being "good enough fellows," and desiring a comfortable shelter for a pleasant smoke in congenial society, in an altogether healthy and humanizing atmosphere, do not find it natural or possible for them to pretend to a spiritual thirst.

The huts vary in size and furniture, and in adornment and luxury. The degree of luxury, in the ordinary sense of the word, is almost always very small, and generally entirely absent. The buildings are generally the plainest structures, with wooden walls, wooden roofs, wooden floors. The essential plan provides a long, large room with apartments for resident workers partitioned off at one end to serve, one for a night-room or dormitory, the other for a day-room, or kitchen, drawing-room, pantry, parlour, and counting-house combined; also a third compartment, to serve as a store-room for the main stock of the various goods sold over the counter in the open hut. In some cases a certain amount of sleeping accommodation for men (that is, for soldiers) is provided in the form of plain, wooden bunks; but in other cases, where visitors come for the night, they are content to sleep on the hard floor, or on bedsteads formed of tables, or chairs, or forms. Further, there is usually a "pokey hole" in the shape of a lean-to, which serves as boiler-house, scullery, and coal-shed. In cases where there are no other apartments, the parlour is found useful for various additional purposes, as, for example, for the holding of religious "services," or for sitting-rooms or sleeping-rooms for officers, who call in ones or twos, and sometimes accept small mercies, and are always grateful for them when they do.

In the open or main portion of the hut, the furniture consists of plain tables, comfortless forms, and not uncomfortable wooden chairs. Commonly there is a piano, which is sometimes played by quite musical men, and at other times pretty constantly strummed upon by some who are not. The interior sides of the hut walls are sometimes painted in a simple style, and generally adorned with unframed pictures; but with the exception of a few flowers, when these are to be had, there are seldom any other ornaments. Some of the tables are supplied with pens and ink, and blotting-pads; others with newspapers and magazines, and the apparatus for such games as draughts and dominoes.

In some cases there are one or more additional spacious rooms for special uses; for example, there may be a special "quiet room," or lecture room, or room for religious services, and here and there an officers' annexe. The ordinary occupations of the men, whilst occupying the huts, are—reading, writing, talking, games, music, and singing, eating and drinking, and smoking. Concerts and other entertainments are often provided, also preaching, and prayer, and praise meetings, and lectures, and classes, both secular and religious—all accord-

ing to circumstances and opportunity. In all huts envelopes and note paper may be had freely for the asking, and in the home huts there is a post-office, for which there is no need in those in foreign lands. At the counter, which is always a feature of the hut, the soldier may purchase light refreshment, including some innocent beverage, such as hot cocoa or tea, or coffee, or cold lemonade. If the quality of the tea or coffee is not always altogether excellent, it is appreciated, and drunk with gratitude, and a kind of grace, as at least "something that is hot," or if it unhappily happens to be rather cold, it is often taken in the same spirit as at least "something that is wet." One may also purchase cake or biscuit, or buttered bread, tinned salmon or sardines, chocolate and toffee, cigarettes and tobacco, boot and metal polish, and buttons that require neither thimbles nor thread; also cough lozenges and Epsom salts, and a number of similar articles of all these various sorts. There is also a lending library, or at all events a shelf or two of loan literature, and for those of the more religious type, free Testaments and other little aids to devotional meditation.

The persons in charge of the huts are volunteer and unpaid workers, serving for various lengths of time, generally not less than three months. They are not all experts in any direction. Some of them—especially in the huts at "the base"—are women; a fair proportion are professional ministers of religion; but all are people, whether men or women, clergymen or laymen, who go to work with motives derived from a due regard for the threefold nature of man; and whilst the body and mind of the men are coming constantly, at least obliquely, into view, always keep directly in sight, whether as the fundamental base or capital top-side of the mystic triangle, the spiritual component part.

The men themselves are most appreciative of the comfort afforded them in the Y.M.C.A. huts—quite surprisingly so considering how small the comfort is compared with the comfort of a comfortable home, but not unnaturally, when it is compared to the comfortless condition of camps, roads, and trenches; whilst the feature they most appreciate is release from the rigidity of military restraints—the substitution of warm-hearted hospitality for soulless, if necessary, system, and unremitted formality.

The huts, or the pecuniary means of building, furnishing and maintaining them, apart from the profits of the unprofitable counters, are the gifts of generous donors, individually or collectively. If the readers of this magazine would like to aid the work with their sovereigns, or even their sixpences or shillings, I would recommend them to send their contributions to the Editor, and ask him to forward them to the proper quarter.

EUSTACE THOMPSON.

THE Y. M. C. A.

SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE.

SUNDAY.

OF course Sunday with the British Army in France is just like every other day, only a bit more so, and if it were not that the Y.M. (these initials represent the worker who, if not young in years, believes that he is still young in spirit), has an engagement to conduct religious service and preach in the evening, he might easily run a risk of forgetting entirely that the day is Sunday. That particular engagement, however, causes him to make enquiries from time to time as to the day of the week, in order that when Sunday comes round there may be no mistake.

And the day for him begins at the same hour as every other day. Prompt at 2-30 a.m., what "Tommy" would call "that eternal alarm clock," placed very close to the head of the sleeper, creates perfect pandemonium, and faithfully persists in its function until the sleeper awakes and pulls out to the duties of another new day. No time may be lost. There is a walk of quite a mile from billets to the scene of

operation—first through a small French village, whose narrow winding streets, dotted about with heaps of mud and refuse, are not easy to negotiate in the dark, and then along the outskirts of a base camp to a railway siding in a deep cutting, where stands a Y.M.C.A. motor kitchen. From a distance it is apparent that the orderly has already arrived, for the fires of the boilers, which stand outside the motor, are seen to be burning brightly, and a closer approach discloses the fact that even at that early hour a small crowd of soldiers are enjoying the hospitable light and warmth of the Y.M.C.A. The men greet the Y.M. with a hearty "good morning," and in a variety of phrases express their indebtedness to the Association for the genial and kindly hospitality it offers to them. There is much to be done before business can begin. The water is brought to the boil, and close upon twenty gallons of cocoa are made—this quantity just by way of a preliminary run. Inside, the lamps are lighted ; one side of the motor opens up until it is parallel with the ground, and is held in position there with iron rods ; a seat inside which runs the length of the motor, unfolds outwardly, and—there you are, all complete and ready to begin. Two assistants arrive from one of the huts in the camp. A small tressel table is fixed up in front of the boilers, and an urn placed upon it; indeed everything is ready just in the nick of time. For, though you cannot see far into the darkness, you can hear the steady tramp of marching men ; you can hear the short, sharp military commands as they are shouted forth, and presently you know, even without looking, that you are surrounded on all sides, and that your motor kitchen, with its boilers and fires, has become a kind of Y.M.C.A. oasis in a veritable wilderness of bustle and darkness. A few minutes ago all was comparatively quiet, but now it is an entirely different story. Up to three thousand men may be present, and as at this spot the Y.M.C.A gives each man a free drink of cocoa, each man comes for his drink, officers and all. It is, indeed, now a busy scene. The two assistants go into the motor, and take charge there, selling biscuits, cake, chocolate, cigarettes, matches, and candles. Outside, at the small table, the Y.M. takes charge of the cocoa.

The scene has become as busy as one could desire to see. The pressure is nothing short of oppressive. Innumerable billy tins are pointed towards the worker—tall men reaching over the heads of shorter ones. "Say, mate," says one man, "put in for two, please, me and my chum." The next man, having taken the tip, politely suggests that he might be given enough for three ; and yet another, who is undoubtedly about to ask for sufficient for four, is anticipated by the Y.M., who in a friendly way asks him if he would like enough for the whole platoon ! Hereupon follows a general and good-natured laugh, and *that* little game is up ! But what tremendous pressure there is ; and how impossible to keep the crowds back ! The men at the rere are in the dark, and cannot see. Those at the table have striven to neutralize the force, but without success, and at last the front line succumbs, and over goes the table, urn, Y.M. and all ! Fortunately that particular urn was about finished, so a new start can be made. A couple of the men, in response to a gesture, at once lift a fresh urn on to an empty biscuit box, and we carry on again. The Y.M. enjoys himself ; this is fine. He thinks of glorious, odd moments in past years, when he used to find himself hidden from view in the centre of a Rugby football scrum, and he works on with renewed zest. But the best he can do is not sufficient. He pauses a moment, and then addresses the crowd. "Boys," he says, "it is impossible to get along on these terms ; fall in, single file, and we'll try again." At once there comes a shout, in unison : "right o !" and the men jump into single line, which tails away off into the darkness. You can always depend upon the discipline and upon the good humour and the politeness of the British "Tommies." They are the politest and the altogether most likable lot of men this Y.M. ever met. They never ask without saying "please,"

and they never take without saying "thank you." And they are deeply grateful for any kindness shown them. They may, in passing, ask you to put a little "Scotch" into their cocoa, or, it may be "Irish," just according to taste; but it is only necessary to say you have not got a licence, and they are quite satisfied with the reply, declaring that the cocoa is good enough as it is, and "don't know what we should have done without the Y.M.C.A."

To obtain a little rest, a change of occupation is resorted to, and the Y.M. exchanges places with an assistant in the motor. Here the business is every bit as fast and furious. There seems to be no end to the demand for biscuits, chocolate, and cigarettes. "Gie me a tuppeny packet o' biscuits, please," cries one "Tommy," and he puts down in payment thereof an English sixpence. "Hello," says the server, "how much change do you want?" "Why," answers the "Tommy," "I spent tuppence and I gave ye sixpence, looks as if I should get fourpence back, doesn't it?" "No, that won't do," says the vendor, "try again." "Can anyone tell him how much change he should get?" "Fivepence" is the reply from various parts of the crowd. "Righto, or more correctly speaking, fifty centimes, which looks very much like the same sort of thing," and the young fellow retires, feeling that the Y.M.C.A. is a very decent kind of institution indeed. But the Y.M. gets held up occasionally. "Gie me a bar o' chocolate, please." "Righto, one penny," and the purchaser, with an ill-concealed twinkle in his eye, tables a postal order for seven and sixpence! Phew! and he has to get his change in French money! But, we carry on, nevertheless. An officer, who has been quietly edging his way in, remarks, in a confidential tone, that he has got no money at all, and will the Y.M.C.A. kindly cash him a cheque? "Certainly; how much do you want?" "Twenty francs will do." Righto, and please subscribe your rank and regiment." To its manifold functions the Y.M.C.A. has more than once added that of banker. And what is more important than all, when "Tommy," stoney-broke and hungry, has proclaimed his condition, the Y.M.C.A. has fixed him up, made him comfortable, and sent him on his way rejoicing. The Y.M. knows, because he has done it more than once. What the Y.M.C.A. does not do for the British soldier is scarcely worthy of record.

But daylight has come, and the soldiers have taken their places in the trucks, and the train is about to pull out. True, it is three or four hours late in making its start, but even so, we have had a busy and a pleasant time. The Y.M. steps forward to the track, for surely someone must see the boys off, and say "good-bye." They are going "up the line," and we must give them a send-off. As the trucks pass the soldiers cheer, mindful, no doubt, of the hot cocoa, and the Y.M. responds—"Good luck, boys, and safe home, and you'll find the Y.M.C.A here when you come back." And now they are away. A bit of a lump rises in one's throat, and one's eyes get dimmed. They are a fine lot of fellows, so light-hearted, and thinking nothing of the grim task in front of them. Will they come back? God knows!

About 9 o'clock business ceases, and the Y.M. goes back to headquarters for breakfast. The rest of the morning is spent variously, totting up accounts, seeing to the replenishment of stores, and possibly getting an hour's rest. At 2 o'clock business begins again, and goes on till between 5 and 6 o'clock. It is of the same nature as that of the earlier part of the day, though the pressure may not this time be so great.

Let us not forget, however, that it is Sunday, and that the Y.M. started out to tell about Sunday. Well, he has been telling about Sunday all the time. So far it has been just the same as any other day. Now comes the extra bit. There is that engagement of his which marks the day off from the rest of days. After tea he starts out, and a walk of something more than a mile brings him to a large and commodious Y.M.C.A. hut, where he will lead in religious service and preach. What a busy place it is! And business is in full swing!

There is a counter at one end of the hut, and a stage at the other. The place is packed with soldiers. About 6-45 o'clock the men begin to turn in the direction of the stage. Someone in the "congregation" will call out the number of a hymn; the pianist, who is on the stage, will play a bar or two of the tune, and then the men join together in singing the hymn. That goes on for half an hour—any man who cares may have his choice of hymn. At 7-15 o'clock the minister, whose pulpit is the stage, comes forward and says: "We will continue our worship of Almighty God by singing hymn No. 27, "All people that on earth do dwell." The men stand up, and the way they sing that hymn is a thing to be remembered. The devotional spirit is in the hearts and minds of all. A great quiet pervades the place whilst the minister says prayer, and you can feel the communion of Spirit when, in the course of prayer, he commends to our Father's guidance and keeping the loved ones in the homelands. It is a prayer in which all hearts and desires are joined, and then all unite in saying the Lord's Prayer. A familiar passage of Scripture is read, other hymns are sung, a short address, setting forth the simple Gospel story, followed by the benediction, brings the service to a close, and the men disperse to their tents. It was good to be there. The day has been a busy and a long one, but it ended as one would like Sunday always to end, in an expression of thankfulness to our Heavenly Father that He has brought us so far safely on our heavenward pilgrimage.

A. TURNER.

QUESTIONS CONCERNING BELIEF AND CONDUCT.

CHURCHES AND CREEDS.

Q. 77.—Do all Christians accept the same theology?

A. 77.—No; they are divided into numerous sects or churches by differences of (*a*) creed, or (*b*) ritual, or (*c*) organisation.

Q. 78.—What are the most important divisions of Christendom?

A. 78.—The most important divisions of Christendom are the *Eastern* or *Greek* Churches, and the *Western*, or *Roman*, and *Protestant*, or *Reformed*, Churches.

The principal Greek Churches are those of Russia and Greece; the principal Roman or Roman Catholic Churches are those of Italy, Austria, France, Spain, and Portugal; the principal Protestant Churches, those of Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Holland, and Great Britain.

Roman Catholics and Protestants are to be found in all parts of the world where Europeans have settled, and have numerous missions for the conversion of peoples of other religions to their own respective forms of Christianity.

The Greek and Roman Churches are much alike in general character both of creed and ritual, though there are many minor differences in both kinds. The Greek Church is presided over by a Patriarch, and is served by a married priesthood, whilst the Roman Church is presided over by a Pope, and has a celebate priesthood. In the Roman Church much use is made of sacred images, the place of which in the Greek Church is taken by sacred pictures called *eikons*.

The Protestant Churches are the result of secessions from the Roman Catholic body, which, owing to a felt need for reformation of creed and ritual, took place during the sixteenth century.

Q. 79.—What are the chief respects in which the Protestants differ from the Roman Catholics?

A. 79.—The Protestants do not acknowledge the ecclesiastical sovereignty and infallibility of the Pope of Rome. They claim the right, and declare the duty of the laity—denied by the Roman Catholics—to read and study the sacred Hebrew and Christian Scriptures for guidance in conduct and for inspiration of faith; also they deny the so-called miracle of transubstantiation, by which Roman Catholics believe that bread and wine, employed in the solemn commemoration of the death of Christ on behalf of mankind, are converted into his very flesh and blood.

Q. 80.—What are the principal Protestant groups in the United Kingdom?

A. 80. — The principal Protestant groups in the United Kingdom are the *Anglican Church* and the *Nonconformist sects*. The Anglican Church is the State-established Church of England, conformity with which was at first enforced by Parliament by the Act of Uniformity. Afterwards Non-conformity came to be tolerated.

Q. 81.—What is the main difference between the Church of England and the Protestant Nonconformist sects?

A. 81.—The Church of England is Episcopal, which is to say it is governed by bishops, for whom is claimed the inheritance of ordination by Christ himself through unbroken apostolic succession from the apostles first ordained by him, by virtue of which ordination their own ministry, and that of the clergy receiving ordination from them, possesses special efficacy. The Protestant Nonconformists make no such claim for their clergy or ministers, but consider them qualified to preach and teach, and to do other pastoral work by suitable training and by their own proof of a proper and approved character. Some Protestant sects employ the ceremony of ordination, that is, their new ministers are authoritatively appointed by the laying on of hands by clerical elders; but it is not pretended that by this means any mysterious or special power or benefit is conferred over and above the seal of sanction and approval by the already accredited ministers who receive them into their ranks.

Q. 82.—What are the principal Nonconformist sects?

A. 82.—The largest Nonconformist sects are—the *Presbyterian, Independent, Baptist and Methodist*. Notable among the smaller ones are the *Moravian, Quaker, Swedenborgian, and Unitarian sects*. There are numerous sects besides these.

The *Presbyterian Church* is named from the fact that it is governed by presbyters or elders, clerical and lay, careful provision being made for securing equal shares of power to the clergy and to the laity; also to avoid distinctions of rank among the clergy. Presbyterian societies or congregations of worshippers are grouped together under a court of control called a *Presbytery*, the membership of which consists of the clerical elder or minister and a representative lay elder of each congregation. The Presbyteries are again grouped under higher courts or *Provincial Synods*, the Synods being linked together in a *General Assembly*.

The State-established Church in Scotland is not the Episcopalian, but the Presbyterian Church. Most Presbyterians are *Calvinistic* in doctrine. One of the most notable doctrines of John Calvin being that of Predestination, according to which some men have been divinely predestined for salvation, but a greater number for perdition.

The *Church of the Independents* is so named because its separate societies or congregations are left to govern themselves without being held responsible to any superior ecclesiastical court. The Independents are sometimes called *Congregationalists*.

The *Baptist Church* is named from the rite of adult Baptism by immersion being insisted upon as a condition of church membership.

The *Methodist Church* is so called because it observes the *method* of church discipline and instruction devised by John Wesley. Its members are commonly known as Wesleyans.

The *Moravian Church*, or *Bohemian Brethren*, are a society historically connected with the Bohemian martyr, John Huss, a disciple of John Wycliffe, "the Reformer before the Reformation." They have been distinguished from other sects by their tendency to live as far as possible in communities or colonies, submitting to peculiar social regulations. Their membership in the United Kingdom is but small, but practical proof of the sincerity of their Christian profession has made their influence relatively considerable.

The *Quakers*, or *Friends*—to use their own designation for themselves—are a religious society founded by George Fox during the seventeenth century. They believe in the inward constraining action of the Holy Spirit. They are remarkable for the special importance they attach to certain actions, and to

certain points of daily conduct. There is, perhaps, no sect which has made such a decided and concerted attempt to make conduct conformable to the precepts and example of Jesus himself.

The *Swedenborgians*, or *New Church*, accept the doctrines of a Swedish philosopher, Emanuel Swedenborg, who claimed to have received most astounding revelations.

The *Unitarian* sect, whilst claiming to hold views of the same type as those of Jesus Christ with regard to theology and conduct, differ from other Christian sects with respect to belief concerning the personality of Jesus himself. Instead of believing that there is but one God, but a Trinity of Persons in the Godhead, consisting of "God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost," and that Jesus himself is the Second Person of the Trinity, as the other Christian sects profess to believe (with the exception of the Swedenborgians, who believe that "God assumed humanity as the Son," but deny the "Trinity in Unity.") Unitarians deny both the fact and possibility of the Trinity in Unity, and believe in the simple humanity of Jesus.

The Unitarians again, whilst affirming that the creeds of the other sects contain a great deal that is foreign to the thought and simple teaching of the revered founder of Christianity, refuse to adopt—much more, to insist upon as infallible or essential—any stereotyped creed as a basis of religious association. They attach less importance to the quest of right belief than to the endeavour after righteous conduct, in accordance with the words of Jesus :—

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Mt. vii. 21.)

and—

"Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Lk. vi. 46.)

In respect of Church government, the Unitarians of Great Britain and America have adopted the Congregational, those of Ireland the Presbyterian, and those of Hungary the Episcopalian principle. E. T.

LESSON NOTES FOR TEACHERS.

TO BE USED WITH THE SCHEME OF INSTRUCTION FOR SUNDAY SCHOOLS ISSUED BY THE N.S.P.C.I. FOR 1917.

MARCH 4. A WONDERFUL SABBATH DAY. Read Mark i. 21-39. Key text, Mark i. 22.

1. *Jesus in the Synagogue.* It was by no means unusual for the officials of the Synagogue, after the opening religious exercises were over, to call on some visiting teacher who happened to be present, to expound the law. In this way Jesus, and especially St Paul, did a great deal of their teaching. But Jesus astonished them, not indeed so much by what he said, but by the way he said it—*with authority*. The reason was, that Jesus felt the Fatherhood of God so intimately that he could speak of God's will as something he really knew, understood, and practised.

2. *The demoniac.* It was the evil spirits, feeling that their power was threatened, who first recognised the divine power of Jesus. In most cases, those who were said to be possessed by demons were lunatics and epileptics, and over these cases a truly powerful personality like Jesus would wield healing influence. For *elder scholars.*— It is very difficult to state with any exactitude what is meant by the phrase "possessed with devils." It would seem as if all cases which could not be regarded as simple sickness, *e.g.*, epilepsy, paralysis, nervous and mental diseases, were regarded as the work of evil spirits who dwelt within the sufferer. It is precisely these cases which need more than any what we may roughly term "mind cure." Not that this *explains* all Jesus' healing work, but it does suggest a way of understanding it.

3. *At Eventide.* Teachers should do their best to make vivid this beautiful scene of ailing and distressed sufferers crowding round the Good Physician. It shows Jesus in a most gracious light. His own comfort and rest mattered not compared with the sufferings of humanity. For *elder scholars*, compare Mark i. 34 with Matt. iv. 23, 24. Mark says

he healed *many*, but Matthew says he healed *all*. Mark does not claim an absolute supernatural power for our Lord.

4. *The early morning.* Jesus went out alone to pray. He had need to take in of the Holy Spirit in order to give it out. Herein is a lesson for us all. If we would do good, we need to keep our hearts constantly open in prayer to the goodness of God. If we would be helpful, we must have the means to help. To be able to teach we must be able to learn. For *elder scholars*—verses 38 and 39 are important. They show that Jesus did not work wonders in order to show off his power. He came to teach men. He only healed them because they *needed* it. But do we not love him the more because he gave way to the cries of suffering, and sometimes put aside his teaching in order to help and heal.

March 11. THE FRIEND OF SINNERS. Read Mark ii. 1-17. Key text, Mark i. 17.

1. *Healing the paralytic.* The trouble was that, as soon as the people discovered Jesus' healing power, they overwhelmed him with the work of curing their bodies rather than their souls. Too many of us are like that. We are always thinking about our bodies. We pay more regard to the presents and prizes we get than to getting a pure and grateful heart. Jesus, therefore, as we said in the last lesson, was compelled sometimes to avoid healing so as to have more time for teaching—for it was this that would make men fit for the kingdom of heaven. It was because of his fame as a healer that the house at Capernaum was filled to overflowing. Hence the friends of the paralytic (palsy = paralysis) had to uncover the flat roof and let the sufferer down at the feet of our Lord. Their determination proved their faith, and Jesus commended them and healed the man. Note, we prove our faith in what is good by letting no difficulties stand in our way. For *elder scholars.*—It is worth while noticing that Jesus seems always to have asked for faith before he healed. In one case it is said that he *could* not heal them because they lacked faith.

Forgiving sins. Jesus astounded the scribes by saying to the man: "Thy sins are forgiven thee." But in those days men believed that all illness was the result of sin, as indeed it is, although it may not be the sin of the sufferer himself. Therefore, to heal and to forgive sins was one and the same thing. In verse 10 Jesus states the glorious principle, that it is in the power of men to forgive. We become Godlike by forgiving as we expect God to forgive For *elder scholars.* — The title "Son of man" is difficult to explain, but in this verse it seems definitely to mean "mankind in general.'

The friend of publicans and sinners. The righteous Pharisees were shocked because Jesus was friendly with publicans and sinners. "Publicans" means "tax collectors," and they were hated by the Jews because they did the work of their Roman masters. "Sinners" does not only mean those we call the bad people; it means also those who did not happen, so to speak, to go to the same church as the Pharisees. Jesus, however, put the "righteous" Pharisees to shame by the simple statement that the spiritually healthy (the good folk) do not need preaching, but only the spiritually sick (the sinners). His business was to heal the sick, that is, reform the sinners. If the Pharisees were really good, they did not need him. But their selfish objection to the sick being healed showed that they were as bad as any sinners. Herein is a lesson for us. If we are good we shall do our best to help and comfort those who are unfortunate and sinful. If we refuse to do that we are not good.

MARCH 18. THE LORD OF THE SABBATH. Read Mark ii. 15-25. Key text, Mark iii. 4.

Fasting. The chief purpose of fasting is to withdraw our thoughts from such earthly things as food and drink, so that we may think of heavenly things. All good Jews had to fast once a year on the great Day of Atonement, but the Pharisees, and also John's disciples, in their anxiety to keep the body in check, multiplied the number of fast

days. Some were fasting on the 2nd and 5th day of each week. All Roman Catholics, and some Protestants, observe frequent fast days. Jesus and his disciples did not fast, not because Jesus said it was wrong—he never condemns fasting—but because there was such a heavenly spirit amongst him and his disciples that they had no need to fast. If, however, we are not full of this heavenly spirit, then fasting is helpful. *True* Christians, however, should always be filled with heavenly spirit, and therefore fasting can play no part in *genuine* Christianity. That is the meaning of verses 21 and 22. It is no use mixing up old and new things. Christianity is a new dispensation. But are we all *true* Christians?

The Sabbath. Jesus teaching on the Sabbath is very difficult for those who are not true Christians to understand. The idea of keeping the Sabbath holy is to help us to be holy at all times. But the Jews tended to keep it holy just for the sake of keeping it holy and nought besides. Hence they multiplied enormously the things one must *not* do on the Sabbath. Sometimes their devotion to the Sabbath was absolutely heroic, as, for instance, when in the Maccabean wars they let themselves be slaughtered rather than fight on the Sabbath; and again, when they let the Romans, at the siege of Jerusalem, advance unhindered on the Sabbath day. But sometimes it was silly, and even wicked. For instance, they held that it was very wrong to do anything towards preparing a meal on the Sabbath. This did not matter to those who were comfortably off, for their servants prepared nice cold meals for them on the day before. But Jesus and his disciples were homeless, and therefore for their dinner they had to pluck and rub the ears of corn. Jesus declared that he was quite right, because the Sabbath was meant to do men good, not to make them miserable. So again, at the beginning of chapter 3, he rebukes the strict Jews, who would not even *do good* on the Sabbath. Many folk to-day are like the Jews in this. They make the Sabbath a misery. Jesus, however, came to make all days happy and holy, and did not need the Sabbath to remind him. But we have to be *genuine* Christians to follow him in this. Personally, I think we best express the spirit of our Lord by not using the word Sabbath, but rather the word Sunday, which means "day of the sun," a bright, happy day. Such a day would, indeed, give a Christian tone to the rest of the week.

MARCH 25. JESUS CHOOSES THE TWELVE. Read Mark iii. 6-19. Key text, Mark iii. 14.

Jesus' growing popularity. He could hardly get away from the enthusiastic crowds. *For elder scholars.*—Jesus is always most anxious that those possessed with evil spirits should make his divine power known. One reason for this, doubtless, was his fear that he should be hailed as the Messiah because he could heal men's bodies. He was willing enough to heal, but he knew that the kingdom of heaven would never come unless men hailed him as the Messiah because he could heal their souls.

The choice of the Twelve. It is clear that Jesus had many more than twelve disciples at this time; but the rapid growth of his work made it imperative that he should have a few trusty deputies and more counsel, so to speak, who could direct the work. Then from the larger body of disciples he chose twelve who were to be in particular his disciples. So all *true* Christians are, strictly speaking, disciples, although a few men are chosen, *e.g.*, ministers, whose duty is to superintend the general work of discipleship. Therefore it is for us all, no matter how humble, to feel that we are disciples.

The *charge* given to the Twelve was to do what their Lord was doing, preach and heal. Although the preaching (which is spiritual healing) was the more important, yet their ability and readiness to heal and comfort would be a proof of the genuineness of their preaching. The *meaning* of a few of the disciples' names is interesting. (1) *Simon*, whom he called *Peter*. Peter means the Rock. Thus our Lord marks out Simon as his right hand man. (2) *Boanerges*, which is *sons of thunder*.

No doubt James and John were so called because of their ardent and impetuous disposition (see Mark ix. 38; Luke ix. 54). (3) *Simon the Cananæan.* This does not mean a dweller in Canaan. The word for that would be Canaanite. But Cananæan means "the zealot," no doubt referring to a strict sect to which this Simon formerly belonged. (4) *Judas Iscariot* means Judas, the man of Kerioth.

THE LIMBLESS HOSPITAL.

SALE IN CENTRAL HALL, ROSEMARY STREET.

In aid of the funds of the Limbless Hospital for Ulster soldiers and sailors a Sale of Work has been organised by the ladies of the First Presbyterian Congregation, Rosemary Street, and at the inaugural ceremony in the Central Hall, Rosemary Street, on 23rd February, there was a very large attendance. The whole of the stalls were well filled, and ample evidence was forthcoming of the generosity of the members of the congregation and their friends. One of the stalls contained a handsome collection of paintings, etchings, and prints, and here there was on view for sale a small portrait which had been specially painted by Mr. John Lavery, who presented it to the organisers of the sale as a free gift. Mr. Lavery's kindness, it is hardly necessary to say, was very much appreciated, and his canvas, a characteristic example of his brilliant brushwork, was inspected with interest and admiration by visitors. The arrangements have been made by an energetic committee, with Miss Armstrong as the hon. secretary, and Mrs. Hume as the hon. treasurer. The opening ceremony was performed by the Lord Mayor (Mr. James Johnston, J.P.). In the absence, through indisposition, of Rev. H. J. Rossington, minister of the church, Mr. Bowman Malcolm presided.

The Chairman said ever since the War commenced the members of the First Congregation had tried to do their duty in regard to our soldiers and sailors. Last year six entertainments were held in aid of St. Dunstan Hospital for the Blind, and a sum of about £500 was realised. In addition there had been collections every fourth Sunday in favour of the Red Cross, and they had also produced a considerable sum of money. Not content with raising money by these means, the ladies had devoted a great amount of time and labour to the work of providing comforts for our fighting men.

The Lord Mayor, who was very cordially received, said he was glad to be present and to associate himself with such a laudable work as that which they had undertaken. The First Presbyterian Congregation were always prominent in philanthropic and charitable movements, and he did not know any institution more worthy of their support than the Limbless Hospital.

Mr. C. J. M'Kisack proposed a vote of thanks to the Lord Mayor.

Mr. Fred Rogers, in seconding, said he would like to thank the ladies concerned in the present effort. They received their first patients at the Limbless Hospital on the 1st August, and since then they had had 146. Of these 91 had been supplied with new limbs, 23 were waiting for limbs, and there were 18 others who were still to be fitted.

The motion was passed and suitably acknowledged by the Lord Mayor.

Mrs. Hume, as Honorary Treasurer, said about £212 had been received in donations, so that they started very auspiciously.

The following ladies, assisted by a band of workers, were presidents in connection with the stalls:—Miss M'Tear, Mrs. Riddel, Miss Riddel, Miss Porter, Mrs. Rossington, Miss Dickson, Mrs. Cleland, Mrs. Fraser Lowry, and Mrs. M'Fadden. The arrangements for the competitions were superintended by Miss Ferguson, and for the entertainments by Miss M'Kisack, Mrs. Moore (Merlyn), and Mrs. A. H. R. Carr.

The Sale was continued on Saturday afternoon, 24th February, and was formally re-opened by the singing of the National Anthem, the accompaniment being played by Mr. Wilfred Layton, F.R.C.O., organist of the church.

Reports.

Unity Guild.—Unhappily our secretary was unavoidably absent from the "Magazine Night" on February 15th. This was specially unfortunate, as he was to have read the papers which had been received. Miss A. Montgomery, however, stepped into the breach, and very kindly undertook the onerous task. Ten papers had been sent in, and the reading of them passed away an hour very pleasantly. The audience ballotted for which was the best paper, and rightly decided in favour of the one which had been written by the President. After tea had been taken, an advertisement competition filled the time till the hour for departure arrived. The next meeting will be of an entirely novel character—the history of the Guild. Two short plays will be performed by the members, under the able management of Mr. Will Rankin. This promises to be the most attractive item in the winter programme, and it is hoped that members and friends will not fail to be at Rosemary Hall on March 14th to see how well our amateurs can act.

Banbridge.—Under the auspices of the Banbridge Unitarian Church Literary Guild, an interesting lecture, entitled "Experiences with the Troops in France," was delivered in the Dunbar Schools on Thursday, December 21st last. Mr. G. Wallace presided, and there was a good attendance. The lecture was both interesting and instructive, and was listened to with rapt attention. Mr. Phelps touched upon the bright and the pathetic sides of the life of the soldier in France, and some of the incidents he described moved the audience deeply. At the conclusion of the address a hearty vote of thanks was passed to the lecturer on the motion of the Rev. Glynn Davies, seconded by Mr. J. Murphy, J.P. The proceeds were in aid of the British Red Cross Society, and a sum amounting to nearly £5 was forwarded to the Society.

On December 29th last the Annual Christmas Entertainment was held. There was a very large attendance of scholars of the Sunday School and their parents and friends. A very enjoyable tea was dispensed by the ladies of the congregation. A large number of prizes for good attendance at the Sunday School were distributed by Miss A. M'Caw amid applause. Afterwards Father Christmas appeared, and out of his bountiful store handed a toy to each person present. A comic sketch, entitled "I'm not myself at all," was staged by the members of the Dramatic Society. This was very much enjoyed. The singing of "Auld Lang Syne" brought a very happy evening to a close.

Cairncastle Old Meeting House.—The Annual Congregational Meeting, which is always much enjoyed, was held on Thursday evening, February 1st, when there was a very good attendance of members. Tea was served shortly after 7 o'clock, and was followed by the business part of the meeting, the minister being in the chair. The secretary's and treasurer's reports were read, the latter showing a balance on the right side. Mrs. Thompson, who gave a report of the Sunday School, stated that there had been an increase in the average attendance. Songs, recitations, readings, and piano solos were supplied by the following ladies and gentlemen:—Miss Nannie Crawford, Miss Mary Buchanan, Miss Laura Lusk, Miss Annie Jane M'Clelland, Mrs. Thompson, Mr. James Maxwell, Mr. Robert Crawford, and the Minister.

The following evening the minister and his wife gave a party, at which a fine gathering of children and young people seemed to enjoy the games and competitions immensely.

On Tuesday, January 9th, Rev. Eustace Thompson, who had just returned from France, where he had been doing Y.M.C.A. Hut work for three months, invited all the members of the congregation to tea in the school-room.

Clough.—The Annual Prize-giving in connection with the Sunday School took place on Friday evening, January 26th. The weather was stormy and cold, yet there was a good muster. The cheery fire, hot tea and cakes, supplied by some of the ladies, soon caused the

scholars and all present to forget the wintry conditions outside. After tea the prizes were distributed by Mesdames M'Cammon and Davies; every scholar was remembered by our generous secretary, Mr. John M'Cammon, Nutgrove. Miss Irvine gave the members of her own class additional prizes, in the form of very suitable and instructive picture books.

Downpatrick.—A very happy Children's Party was held in the Manse School-room early in the year. There was a combined gathering of the Sunday School and the Band of Hope, which has been re-opened. After tea the children had a round of rollicking games, and to their great delight a huge "snow ball" was brought into the room. This had been made and filled with toys by Miss Jordan and Mrs. Philipson, which were distributed amongst those present. The children are being encouraged to take great interest in nature study, and in this connection some 40 tulip bulbs have been distributed, and are being cared for with much pride and pleasure, and the appearance of the flowers eagerly awaited.

Larne and Kilwaughter.—On Wednesday evening, February 7th, the Annual Business and Social Meeting of this congregation was held in the school-room, when there was a very representative attendance. Young ladies of the congregation, assisted by a willing staff of stewards and stewardesses, distributed the comforting cup and accompaniments, after which the Rev. James Kennedy extended a hearty welcome, especially to the new members who had been added to the roll of membership. The annual report and statement of accounts for church and Sunday School were read by the secretary (Mr. Samuel Magill), the treasurer (Mr. D. A. Nelson), and the Sunday School Superintendent (Mr. Frank Wright) respectively. Mr. Samuel Magill then relieved the Minister of the chair, and submitted, to a much gratified audience, the items of a very enjoyable programme of vocal and instrumental music, etc., viz.:—Pianoforte duet, Miss Annie Campbell and Mr. Holmes; song, Rev. M. Watkins; violin solo, given with exquisite taste and feeling, by Miss Lucy Gault; song, Miss Mary Campbell; recitation, given with clear enunciation and appropriate sentiment, by Miss Rosa Canning; song, Miss Morrow; pianoforte solo, Miss Nance Drummond; song (encore), Rev. M. Watkins; song, Miss Lucy Gault; song (encore and responded to), Miss Mary Campbell. Mr. Holmes played the accompaniments in his own masterly style. After the customary votes of thanks to the stipend collectors, tea makers, and all who had contributed to the success of the evening (Rev. M. Watkins, who came from Belfast, being specially remembered), the proceedings were concluded with hymn and benediction.

Templepatrick.—Patriotic Sale at Roughfort.—A most successful sale, organised by the ladies of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, Templepatrick, was held on December 15th, at Roughfort National School. Mr. John Moore, Clady, presiding at the opening ceremony, said the object of the sale was to provide funds for the benefit of our soldiers and sailors. In introducing Mrs. Robert Dunlop, of Belfast, the chairman remarked that Mrs. Dunlop had responded at once to the invitation to come there that day, in spite of the numerous duties she had to perform in the city. Mrs. Dunlop, who was accompanied by the High Sheriff of Belfast, said it gave her much pleasure to be associated with any patriotic effort in that district. She congratulated the ladies on the display of tempting articles on the stalls. She had much pleasure in declaring the sale open, and she wished it every success. After a vote of thanks had been conveyed to Mrs. Dunlop by the chairman, sales proceeded briskly, and a sum of £33 was realized.

DEATHS.

ERSKINE—On 24th February, 1917, at Dunaverney, Ballymoney, James Beers Erskine, aged 74. Buried in the Old Church Burying Ground on 26th February.

MILLAR—On February 6th, 1917, at Ballyhalbert, Co. Down, Henry, the infant son of Robert and Margaret Jane Millar.

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